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524 Words for Casey

I started this semester with an interest in installation and a commitment to exploration. I've been thinking about installation rhetorics for a few semesters, and wanted to understand what drives this curiosity. Practicum has been super useful in letting me interact with installation from various angles and dive deeper into this enduring interest.

During the original interview obstruction, I was inspired by Casey's piece on the obliqueness of rhetoric, and wanted to re-think installations through the lens of slanting methodologies and experiences of space. I first experimented with turning a camera upside down to "interview" spaces through my new visual orientation towards them, and then was excited by the idea of interviewing while hanging physically upside down. What I liked about inviting upside-down-ness into a research process is that the condition invites a bodily comportment that's both nostalgic and playful (think kids on playground monkey bars) and vulnerable–to be upside down is to expose oneself differently to the world, and to consent to experience a space (however familiar) from a position of relative discomfort.

I wanted to continue exploring this embodied tension in our next obstruction, and "installed" a key feature of my bedroom–the over-bed canopy that hangs from the ceiling–upside down, so the center sat in the middle of my floor and the gauzy drapery was pinned up to the walls. I lived with this (very inconvenient) arrangement for a week, and felt myself reorienting affectively towards my space. To live with upside-down-ness was novel, but the difficulty of navigating a space that I'm used to experiencing as homey and familiar quickly became frustrating. I took field notes on how I had to twist my body to orient myself to this space anew, and saw affinities between my embodied experience of the installation and my interest in intellectually and affectively re- or un-installing orientations to a research process.

After Hannah's workshop on interstitiality, I played with installing theory into a collage of images of the Ellsworth Kelly chapel. This project let me curate a public space in ways that make clearer the invisible/ized orientations that we bring to and encounter in the wild. This argument–that spaces are always already installations of some sort–helped me to explain why I see bodies being so important to studies of rhetoric, and draws connections between embodied rhetoric and installation rhetorics. In my next obstruction, I re-emphasized the connection between space and body, and made a corporeal diorama out of found materials and secondhand fibers, which let me dwell with the idea of installation as ubiquitous and the body as a site of un/installing. Here my interest shifted to what it means *to install*, whether mechanical, digital, or organizational.

Install/ation, process, and corporeality were sticky throughout the semester, and Claire and Kimber's feedback on my conceptual keyword paper pointed me towards dishabituation as a site for exploring the process of embodied un/installing. Next semester, I want to explore dishabituation through a multisensorial installation experience, and to think through how centering bodies in inquiries around process might make more sense-able and more detect-able (to borrow from Bennett) the entanglement of bodies and spaces/multiples/realities.